The Humble PETITION AND REPRESENTATION OF THE Sufferings of several Peaceable, and Innocent Subjects, Called by the Name of ANABAPTISTS,

Inhabitants in the County of *Kent*, and now Prisoners in the Goal of *Maidstone*, for the Testimony of a good Conscience.

Together with their Free and Faithful Acknowledgement of the King's Authority and Dignity in Civil things, over all manner of Persons, Ecclesiastical and Civil, within His Majesties Dominions.

With their *Reasons*, Meriting the King's Protection in their Civil and Spiritual Rights, equal with other His Majesties Obedient Subjects.

Humbly Offered to the King's Majesty, and the Consideration of our Fellow Brethren and Subjects.

Well worthy General Observation.

Act. 17. *He hath made of one Blood all Nations of men, &c.*

Job 4.7. *Remember I pray thee, who ever perished being Innocent? or where were the Upright destroyed?*

Job. 34.28. *So that they have Caused the Voice of the Poor to come unto him, and he hath heard the Cry of the Afflicted.*

Rom. 14.3. *Let not him that Eateth, despise him that Eateth not, and let not him which eateth not, condemne him that Eateth; for God hath received him.*

London, Printed for *Francis Smith*, at the *Elephant* and *Castle*, near Temple-Bar, 1660.

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TO HIS MAJESTY, Charles the Second,

KING of *England, Scotland, France* and *Ireland*; and the Dominions thereunto belonging.

May it Please Your MAJESTY,

FOrasmuch as by Authority deriv'd from your Self, several of us your Subjects, inhabitants in the County of Kent, are now imprisoned; it therefore much concerns Thee, O King, to hear what Accompt we give of our present distressed Condition. Thou hast already seen our Confession of Faith, wherein our peaceable Resolutions were declared; We have not violated any part thereof that should cause that Liberty promised from Breda, to be with-drawn; And now for our

 Principles,

Principles, *that most particularly relate to* Magistrates *and* Government, *we have with all clearnesse laid them here before* Thee, *Humbly beseeching they may be Read patiently; and what we say, weighed in the ballance of the Sanctuary; and then judge how worthy we are of either* Bonds or Imprisonment; *and this we the more earnestly desire, because not only our own lives is in danger, but also an irresistable Destruction cometh on our Wives and little Ones, by that violence which is now exercised on us. Disdain not our plainness of Speaking, seeing the* Great God *accepts of the like. And now,* O King, *that all* Thy *Proceedings (both towards us, and all men) may be such as may be pleasing unto the eternal God (in whose hands your and our breath is, who ere long will judge both quick and dead, according to their works) is the Prayers of* Thy *Faithful Subjects and Servants,*

The Prisoners in the Goal at *Maidstone*,
for the Testimony of a
good Conscience.

A free

A free and faithful acknowledgement of the Kings Authority and Dignity in Civil things, over all manner of Persons, Ecclesiastical and Civil, within His Majesties Dominions, &c.

Acts 17. 26. GOD that hath made of one Bloud all Nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the Earth; and hath determined the Times before appointed, and the bounds of their Habitation; hath made this Land the Place of our Nativity and Abode, by which we have an Interest in Common with others Thy Subjects in this Nation, so that none can Deprive us of that which is our Propriety, and Native Birth-rights, without violating the Laws of God and Nature: Yet (may it please Thee, O King,) as if that Law of *doing unto others, as we would be done unto,* had never been Written, neither any Bounds set unto the Wills of men: We Thy Imprisoned Subjects, have (some of us) had our Houses broken open in the dead of the Night, without producing any Authority from Thee, or any inferior Minister under Thee; our Goods and Cattel taken away from some others, and yet detained from us; Our Bodies, some taken from our own Dwellings, and others from our peaceable Meetings, and made Prisoners; and this done unto many of us some Dayes before Thy *Proclamation* was Published; which proceedings doth bring great Distress and Ruine to our selves and Families; for such is our mean Condi-

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tion in this World, that (almoſt) all of us have our outward Subſiſtance, through the bleſſing of God on our daily Labours; Alſo ſome amongſt us, that were Employed in the Publick Service at *Chatham*, and at *Sea*, being yet unpaid; The Bread which our Families have Eat this 10 or 12 Months, hath been taken up upon Credit; and all of us being detained from our Employments, the Cryes of our Families (who ſuffer Hunger) becomes great.

And now, O King, that the Oppreſſed may be Relieved, and Juſtice and Judgment Executed amongſt men, and the Creation of God kept from being a Chaos of Confuſion: The God of Order hath Ordained Government, and ſetteth up Magiſtrates, to Execute ſuch Power as is given from himſelf, for the Ends aforeſaid: And this we have alwayes Aſſerted, in our Diſcourſes and Writings, as appears in our *Declaration of Faith*, Printed about Three Months before Thy coming over, and Re-printed and Preſented to Thy Self above Four Months ſince.

And as for Thy Self, O King, we do believe, and do freely acknowledge, That the Authority and Dignity that Thou now haſt, in being Chief Governour over this Kingdom and its Dominions, is given Thee of God, whoſe the Kingdomes of the World are, *and he giveth them unto whomſoever he vvill*, Dan. 5. 21. And *Promotion cometh neither from the Eaſt, nor from the Weſt, nor from the South; but God is the Judge, he putteth downe one, and ſetteth up another*, Pſal. 75. 6, 7. So ſaith the New Teſtament, *The Powers that be, are ordained of God*, Rom. 13. 1.

And ſeeing the Lord Jeſus hath commanded us his Servants, *To give unto Ceſar the things that are Ceſars*, Mat. 22. 21. Therefore ſhall we pay Cuſtome and Tribute

bute unto Thee; and in all temporal Causes and Things, shall we yield cheerful obedience, not onely to thy self as Supream, but also to all inferiour Magistrates sent by thee; and this we do not only for wrath, but also for Conscience sake, knowing that God hath given thee Power, to punish any that shall do that unto another, which he would not have done unto himself, and in so doing thou wilt be a Minister of God, to us for good, a revenge to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.

And whereas it is alleged against us as a Crime, that we cannot acknowledge any Authority that God hath given Thee, in spiritual Things or Causes; yet if thou wouldst condescend to the reading, and serious considering our ensuing Reasons, it is possible we may be justified by Thee, as in this matter we are in the sight of God, whose Word not onely in this, but in all other Causes, we desire to make our Rule. O King, we therefore beseech Thee to consider, if Thou hast any power to be a Lord over our Faith, or by outward force to impose any thing, in the Worship of God, on our Consciences, it is given unto Thee as Thou art a Magistrate, or as Thou art a Christian; but that Thou hast no such power given unto Thee of God, as thou art a Magistrate appears;

1. Because if Magistrates as such, have such an Authority, then all Magistrates in all Nations have the same Power; then if we lived in *Turky* must we receive the Choran, and be a Worshipper of *Mahomet*? if in *Spain*, be a Papist? in *England* sometimes a Papist, as in *Henry* the 8th dayes? a Protestant in *Edward* the 6th? a Papist again in Queen *Maries*? and a Protestant again in Queen *Elizabeths*? and so for ever as the Authority changes Religion, we must do the same; but God forbid,

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2. Becauſe the Apoſtles themſelves (that gave forth thoſe commandements that are written in Scripture, to be obedient to Magiſtrates) refuſed to be obedient to their Rulers, when they were commanded to forbear, that which they judged part of the Worſhip of God, and ſaid, *Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to harken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.*

Acts 4. 19. *chap.* 5. 29.

3. All the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, that enjoyns obedience unto Magiſtrates, were written when the *Romans* had the Empire of the world, whoſe Emperours were for the moſt part (if not all) Heatheniſh Idolators for the firſt 300 years, until *Conſtantines* time; it therefore cannot be ſuppoſed, that any of theſe Texts of Scripture that calls for obedience to Magiſtrates, intends an obedience in matters of Faith or Worſhip, for then the Chriſtians that lived under thoſe Emperours, muſt needs have denyed Chriſt, and worſhiped the *Roman* gods, as ſome of the Emperours commanded.

And now O King, that no man as he is a Chriſtian, hath power to be a Lord over anothers Faith, or by outward force to impoſe any thing in the Worſhip of God, is as clear,

1. Becauſe the Lord Jeſus Himſelf, nor his Diſciples, would never by any outward force compel men to receive them or their Doctrine; for when the Diſciples of Chriſt (ſuppoſing they might uſe violence as under the Law) would have commanded fire to come from Heaven (as *Elias* did) to conſume them that would not receive them; Chriſt turned and rebuked them, ſaying, *Ye know not what ſpirit ye are of, for the*

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Son of man is not come to destroy Mens lives, but to save them.

2. If any men under Heaven have had any such power in the dayes of the Gospel, the Apostles and Elders in the primitive times must needs have had it, but this they disowned; the Apostle *Paul* in 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. saith thus, *Not for that we have dominion over your Faith, but are helpers of your joy, for by Faith you stand*; yea the Lord Jesus when he strove for Domination forbids it, saying, *Ye know that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion over them, and they that are great do exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so amongst you*; Even so saith *Peter*, speaking to the Elders, *Feed the flock of God which is amongst you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being Lords over Gods Heritage, but be examples to the flock*; and in truth, the Apostles and Disciples were not to use any external force to carry on their Masters work, but onely by shewing the terrours of the Lord, were to perswade men; and in case of resistance, to shake the dust from their feet, as a witnesse against their opposers. *Mat.* 20. 25. 26.

3. It is very plain, that the Lord Jesus himself in his parrable of the Tares and Wheat, forbid any force to be exercised upon false Worshippers, as such, for by the Tares which he forbids the pulling up, cannot be intended the transgressors of the second table, such as Thieves, Murderers, &c. becaus all confesseth with one consent, that the Magistrates Authority reaches such, but those that Christ Jesus would have remain amongst his Wheat, in the field of the world, is the Children of the wicked One; *Mat.* 13.

through Idolatry and Will-worship; this will further appear, if the 28, 29, 30. *verſ.* be compared with the 38, 39. of the ſame Chapter; and the reaſon the Lord Jeſus gives, why both Tares and Wheat muſt grow together, (O *King* that it were engraven with the point of a Diamond, and often laid before Thee) is, leaſt in gathering up the Tares, the Wheat alſo be rooted up with them; How ſad is it to remember how in all ages ſince Chriſt, very ſtrange miſtakes have been on this account; the Lord of Life himſelf was put to death, for ſuppoſed Blaſphemy and wickedneſſe, and accuſed for being an enemy to *Ceſar*, and this done unto him by a people that had the Law of God amongſt them, and were famous in the world for their Earthly Wiſdom and Knowledge. *Stephen* was ſtoned, and *James* the Apoſtle killed with the Sword, ſuppoſed to be Tares, or the Children of the Wicked One, when they were the Pretious Wheat of God, the Chriſtians that ſuffered in the ten Perſecutions, Were they not accuſed of being peſtilent fellows, movers of Sedition, turners of the world upſide down, Enemies to *Ceſar*, when the contrary was moſt true, and they will be found to be the Faithful Martyrs of Jeſus? So in latter times many of thoſe that have been put to death for Hereſie and Blaſphemy, are by this Age acknowledged to be the Saints of God. O *King*, that our Words might be acceptable to thee, conſider that neither Thy ſelf nor Councellors have the ſpirit of infallibility; if the Apoſtles that had an extraordinary ſpirit of diſcerning, muſt not pluck up the Tares, leſt they root

Matth. 26. 65.

John 19. 12.

Acts 6. 13, 14. *chap.* 12. 2.

Act. 24. 5. 12. *chap.* 17. 6, 7.

root up the Wheat also: How can any Prince on Earth undertake a work so dangerous? It is possible many of those that are accounted false Worshippers, and Hereticks in this day, may (at the time when God shall Judge the World in Righteousness) be found the Servants of the Most High God; Remember we pray Thee, that those that lived in the dayes of the Lord Jesus, accused their Fathers, for being guilty of the blood of the Prophets, saying, *If we had been in the dayes of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets*, Math. 23. 29,30. yet themselves killed the Lord of Life; The Romish Church also saith, if they had lived in the dayes of the Heathen Emperors, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Christians, yet puts to death many as righteous as they were; and now many of thy Subjects in this Nation, are ready to say, If we had lived in the dayes of Queen *Mary*, we would not have been guilty with our Fathers in the blood of those good men, that then suffered; yet such a spirit of Persecution is now risen up, as (if not restrained) will terminate in the blood of many good men, and so bring down the wrath of God upon this Generation, and there will be no remedy.

4. To inflict temporal punishments upon any of us thy Subjects, for not conforming to Thy Decrees, that restrains us from the Worship that we know to be of God; Is it not a breach of that Royal Law, that commands Thee, *That whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets*, Mat. 7. 12. And we would in all humility offer to Thy consideration, if Thy Soul were in our Souls stead, wouldest thou be satisfied with the same measure,

as is now dealt unto us, when neither the God of Heaven, nor our own Consciences doth condemn us of any evil intended against Thy Person or Authority? nor can the greatest of our Enemies make any due proof of any Combination or Plotting with any upon the face of the Earth, for the disturbance of the publick Peace; And this we can with boldness say, because we know our own Innocency.

But whereas it is Objected, That the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, under the Old Testament, had power in spiritual Causes, and did punish Blasphemy and Idolatry, which are crimes of the highest nature against God, we confess they had such power, which was given to them in plain Precepts, written in the Law of *Moses*; but the Gospel that we live under is another Dispensation, in which the Lord Jesus is the onely Law-giver, who doth not (as *Moses*) proceed against the Transgressors of his Precepts, by external force and power, to the destroying them in their Bodies and Estates in this life, but in long-suffering waits on men, not willing they should perish, but rather that they should repent and be saved; and when any continues in disobedience to the Gospel, his punishment is eternal, in the world to come; the Apostle *Paul* testifies of himself, *That he was a Blasphemer, and Persecutor*, 1 Tim. 1. 20. And if the mind of God had been, that he should have suffered death in that condition, How should he have had repentance given him, and been such a glorious Instrument in the Church, as afterward he was?

1 *Thes.* 1. 9.
2 *Pet.* 3. 9.
Acts 17. 31.

Furthermore, it is too well known, that the Jews are the greatest Blaspemers against our Lord Jesus Christ,

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as is on the earth; yet it is not the Mind of the Lord they ſhould be deſtroyed from the Face of the Earth, for how then ſhould the Scripture be fulfilled, wherein God hath promiſed to call them, and make them the moſt glorious Nation in the World? Oh how can they be converted, if they be not permitted where the Goſpel is Preached? We ſpeak not this in favour of any blaſphemy, for our Souls abhors it, but becauſe we would have the Lives of men as pretious in Thy Eyes, O King, as they are in the Eyes of the Righteous and moſt Holy God.

5. As it is no wayes lawful from the Word of God, for Chriſtian Magiſtrates to deſtroy, and root out the contrary minded in Religious Matters (although Idolaters.) So ſuch proceedings may many times prove inconſiſtent with the very being of Nations; for ſuppoſe any Nation were wholly Heatheniſh Idolators, and the Word of God coming in amongſt them, ſhould convert the chief Magiſtrates, and twentieth part of the Nation more; muſt he with that twentieth part deſtroy all the other nineteen, if they will not be converted, but continue in their Heatheniſh Idolatry? It cannot poſſibly be ſuppoſed to be warrantable.

From all this that we have ſaid, thou O King, mayeſt ſee, that not without Grounds, do we deny the taking the *Oath* of thy *Supremacy*, which calls for obedience as well in Spiritual & Eccleſiaſtical things and Cauſes, as Temporal; not but that we can freely acknowledge thee to be Supream Governour of all Perſons, as well Eccleſiaſtical

deſiaſtical as Temporal, but ſtill in temporal Cauſes and things: We do alſo as freely Renounce all forreign Juriſdictions and Powers whatſoever, that any on the Earth may pretend to have over any of thy Dominions or Subjects. And whereas ſome have ſaid, that no more is required in the Oath, Conſidered together with the *Proviſo* in the Statute of the 5 *Elizabeth*, and the Queens *Admonition*: Yet we Humbly conceive there is, Becauſe the Queen both in the *Proviſo* and *Admonition*, Challenges ſuch a Power, as was Challenged by her Father, King *Henry the* 8. which was to Burn his Subjects at the Stake for their Diſſenting from him in Religious Matters (as by his practice appeared) And the Queen her ſelf exerciſed the ſame Authority, in putting ſome to Death for their Conſcience in Religion.

And whereas many of us that are now priſoners cannot take the Oath of Allegiance, becauſe we cannot ſwear at all, the Lord Chriſt having forbidden, in that fifth of *Mat.* 33. compared with *Iames* 5. 12. not onely vain Oaths, but alſo ſuch ſwearing as was delivered of old time, and lawful under the Law, as in our Conſciences we are perſwaded, and therefore before now under former powers have denyed to ſwear; Yet

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(God is our Witneſſe, who is the Searcher of all Hearts) we deny not this Oath, becauſe we would not yield due Subjection and Obedience to Thee and Thy Authority; for this we ſay, in the preſence of him that ſhall judge the quick and dead, we do without any deceit, promiſe to live peaceably under Thy Government, and in caſe any thing ſhould be by thee cōmanded in Spiritual Matters wherein we cannot obey, we ſhall not then take up any Carnal or Temporal Weapon againſt Thee or Thy Authority, but patiently ſuffer ſuch puniſhment as ſhall be inflicted on us for our Conſciences.

And now may it pleaſe Thee, O King, that theſe Engagements which we Humbly tender unto Thee, may be accepted of by Thee, and not deſtruction brought on us & our Families for not taking of an Oath; when the engagements before recited, taken before ſome Juſtice of the Peace in a ſolemn manner, with calling God to witneſſe to the truth of what we ſay, without doubt anſwers the end of the Law, that enjoyns the Oath of Allegeance, and may be as much ſecurity from us to Thee, as if we took many Oaths. Why ſhould the very rigor of the Law be exerciſed on us? Yea, but that we fear we are too tedious unto Thee, we could make it clear, that the late dealing of thy inferiour Miniſters hath been ſuch tovvards us, as neither Lavv nor cuſtom hath preſcribed. And novv having faithfully laid our condition and Principles (ſo far as they relate

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to Magistrates or Government) before thee: We therefore beseech Thee, O King, that Liberty may be given us to worship our God, and such bowels of compassion be in Thee, as to give us such speedy relief as may be agreeable to the Mind of God, which made Heaven and Earth, which executed judgement for the oppressed, which giveth food to the hungry, the Lord looseth the Prisoners, *Psalm.* 146. 7.

Signed by us in the Name of the Baptists, now Prisoners in the Goal at Maydstone,

Dated the 25th day of the 11th moneth commonly called *January*.

William Jeffery, *John Reve.*
George Hammon, *James Blackmore,*

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